**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Tuesday 10th July 2018 at 7.00pm at**

**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Present**

Rinchen Ato (from 8.10pm), Kay Blayney, Sophie Bryce, Kate Daenke (from 7.35pm), Julia Margretts (Chair), Ken Ong, Alex Pearson (Acting Head), Mitali Peckham (from 7.20pm), Sue Smith and Shelly Thake

By invitation: Tandy Harrison

Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

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|  |  | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** |  |
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|  | Apologies for absence were received from Marisol Basilio, Roger Lilley, Mick Patel and Ross Sargent. |  |
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| **2.** | **Declarations of Interest** |  |
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|  | There were no declarations of interest. |  |
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| **3.** | **Minutes of 26th April 2018** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 26th April 2018 were approved as a correct record. |  |
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| **4.** | **Matters Arising from the Minutes of 26th April 2018** |  |
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| **a)** | **Early Years strategic planning group** – Alex reported that there had been no further news from Jon Lewis, Service Director for Education, about his proposal to form a Countywide Early Years strategic planning group. |  |
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| **b)** | **Early Years funding** – Julia reported that Lucy Powell MP had recently been interviewed on the Today programme about funding for maintained nursery schools. A group of nursery Heads had been to London to lobby the previous week. There had been no update from Jon Lewis on his proposal to contact Liz Truss MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury. |  |
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| **c)** | **Children’s Centre carry forward** – Sue reported that there was a carry forward of around £50,000 from the former South Cambridge Children’s Centre, which the local authority had not yet reallocated. Governors agreed that Homerton should request a share of this. It was agreed that Julia would e-mail Anne Kent, copying in other members of the former Children’s Centre Joint Committee. Governors suggested that the e-mail should set out a constructive case for Homerton receiving a share, in particular to support community activities during the transitional period following the closure of the Children’s Centre. | **Julia** |
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| **d)** | **Critical incident and lockdown policy** – This had been agreed by Resources Committee but would need updating in September to reflect changes to personnel. | **Alex** |
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|  | [Mitali arrived at 7.20pm.] |  |
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| **5.** | **Governor Recruitment** |  |
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|  | Governors welcomed Tandy Harrison, a prospective local authority Governor to succeed Julia from September. Governors noted that Tandy had extensive teaching and Governor experience and was also Chair of the Board of Trustees of Eddie’s. Tandy confirmed that she had submitted her application to become a local authority Governor and was awaiting local authority approval. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that Marisol Basilio had confirmed her willingness to become a co-opted Governor but had been unwell and was unable to attend this meeting. It was agreed to defer her appointment to the September meeting. | **Gwyneth** |
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|  | Julia and Shelly would both be standing down at the end of the current school year. With the above planned appointments, overall there would be one vacancy on the Governing Body from September for a co-opted Governor. All Governors were invited to consider possible nominees. | **All Governors** |
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| **6.** | **Chairs and Committee Memberships** |  |
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|  | It was agreed to review Chairs and Committee memberships in September, once the anticipated new Governors had been appointed. |  |
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|  | [Kate arrived at 7.35pm.] |  |
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| **7.** | **Review of Governing Body Effectiveness** |  |
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|  | Julia reminded Governors that it was useful for the Governing Body to reflect annually on its practice. She invited Governors to record on Post It notes their thoughts on what the Governing Body did well and what might make it even better. These notes would be collated and reviewed to identify any particular issues or training needs. | **Alex/****New Chair** |
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|  | A summary of Governors’ contributions is attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes. |  |
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| **8.** | **Governors’ Attendance at Training Events** |  |
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|  | The summary of Governors’ attendance at training events during the year was noted. Gwyneth agreed to the list the session on Ofsted run by Phil Garnham for the full Governing Body. Newly appointed Governors were encouraged to attend the local authority’s induction session. | **Gwyneth****New Governors** |
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| **9.** | **Head’s Report** |  |
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|  | Alex briefed Governors on the following issues: |  |
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| **a)** | **Children** – The Centre was currently full. Activities to support forthcoming transitions were underway, with Reception teachers visiting Homerton and children visiting Morley. Children who would be staying on at Homerton in September were visiting their new classes. |  |
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|  | Anticipated numbers for September were very good for this point in the year, with 24 expected in West room, 22 in East Red, 18 in East Blue, 5 in East Purple (30-hour children spanning the two East room groups) and 23 in South am, the 15-hour mornings only class that was traditionally hard to fill. Alex suggested that the positive figures were due to starting recruitment earlier; organising lots of visits for prospective parents; and the opening of the second Nest room. The Nest was also almost full for September. |  |
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| **b)** | **Staffing** – Bernie Cafferkey would be returning to Homerton in September as a teacher and trainee SENCO. Louise Yarrow, who would be retiring at the end of term, would be providing SENCO support to Bernie on a consultancy basis. Felicity Higginson would be reducing her hours to 2.5 days a week and would be working in East Blue. Mitali would be moving to East Red. Fran Crouch had been appointed as a teaching assistant in East Red, replacing Tamsin Fry, who would be in West Room one day a week, job sharing with Angie Ingle in West Room. Julie Beattie had been appointed as a new teaching assistant in the Nest. Harriet Riches would continue as Nest leader, responsible for both rooms, but would be reducing her holiday club hours to three weeks a year. Arrangements had been made to ensure ongoing holiday club cover. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that all staff in the Nest were being moved from the childcare pay scale to the teaching assistant pay scale, as used for the teaching assistants in the nursery school. The financial impact of this change had been discussed at Resources Committee. |  |
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|  | Kay commented on the need for sound induction and setting of expectations for new staff, especially people who would be returning to Homerton to take up different roles from those held previously or who would be changing roles within the Centre. Alex and Kay agreed to discussed this further. | **Alex/Kay** |
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| **c)** | **Centre Development Plan** – Governors noted that: |  |
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|  | * The CDP had been updated with all actions now showing as green with the exception of the comparison of Maths data for 2016/17 and 2017/18. The data for 2017/18 was currently being compiled and comparisons would be made shortly.
 | **Alex** |
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|  | * The staff survey had been new this year. To date 19 responses had been received out of a possible 38. Questions had been adapted from the Ofsted model to make them appropriate to the setting and had covered issues such as perceptions of children’s safety and education; leadership; and whether staff were proud to work at Homerton.
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|  | * Under Governance, there was scope still to improve the induction arrangements for new Governors. The action to develop a succession plan would need to be replaced for 2018/19 with monitoring and evaluating the new Governing Body.
 | **Alex** |
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| **d)** | **Catering and cleaning** – Alex reported that Dolce Ltd had been appointed as Homerton’s caterers from October. Making new cleaning arrangements was still proving problematic. One company had submitted a quote; another had visited but not yet quoted. One company had not wanted to tender because of the cost they would have to cover relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme. |  |
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| **e)** | **Premises** – The toilets serving the new Nest room would be changed over the summer to make them more child-friendly. Some garden maintenance had been carried out, including work to manage the Forest School area. |  |
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| **f)** | **GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)** – The nursery schools were working together, led by Brunswick, to update policies affected by GDPR. |  |
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| **g)** | **Events** – The nursery trip to Wandlebury had gone well. The Really Wheelie event had raised over £800. A beekeeper had visited Homerton; children had been able to see bees in a demonstration hive and to taste their honey. |  |
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| **h)** | **Messy Play** – Kate had carried out an informal visit relating to Messy Play and tabled her report at the meeting. She reported that discussions were taking place on the running of Messy Play from September; she and Suzy Hughes would continue to provide support and other parents had also agreed to help. |  |
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|  | Governors thanked Alex for her report and for all of her hard work during a testing year. |  |
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|  | [Rinchen arrived at 8.10pm.] |  |
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| **10.** | **Key Issues from Curriculum Committee** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the meetings of the Curriculum Committee held on 14th May 2018 and 25th June 2018 were received. Governors noted that: |  |
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|  | * There had been a focus this year on maths, with the Mathematical Development Policy circulated as part of the Governing Body agenda (Minute 15 below). The Literacy and Communication & Language Policies would be considered next year.
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|  | * The Committee had also considered events held within the Centre and had suggested that more Governors might be able to support them if given earlier notice.
 | **Alex** |
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|  | Governors welcomed the new format for the minutes and thanked the parent Governors, Kate, Sophie and Ross, for minute-taking. |  |
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| **11.** | **Key Issues from the Teaching School** |  |
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|  | Kay updated Governors on key issues from the Teaching School: |  |
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| **a)** | **ITT (Initial Teacher Training)** – All of the current year’s trainees were expected to achieve Qualified Teacher Status imminently. The quality of mentoring had been an issue and would need to be reviewed if the Teaching School were to run ITT again in future years. However, it was not currently expected that the Teaching School would run ITT for 2018/19, due to insufficient applicants. Kay suggested that potential applicants were choosing either to train with an alternative primary provider or to train as secondary school teachers, in part because of the attractive bursaries for maths and science. |  |
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| **b)** | **Teacher apprentices** – The Teaching School had been hoping to offer teacher apprentice places for 2018/19. However, this would not be happening as the Teaching School was not currently an accredited provider and had been unable to arrange accreditation from another source. It was possible that the Teaching School would seek accreditation for itself for future years. |  |
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| **c)** | **Successful bids** – Work continued on the literacy and SEND bids, including input from Alex. Kay Blayney and Kay Dimelow had been carrying out early years audits in the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire ‘Opportunity Area’. |  |
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| **12.** | **Safeguarding** |  |
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| **a)** | **Visit by Safeguarding Governor** – Ken reported that as named Safeguarding Governor, he had carried out his visit on 26th June 2018. His report had been circulated with the agenda. Some actions had been recommended, including refreshing the safeguarding display within the Centre and updating the parents’ handbook in line with GDPR. |  |
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| **b)** | **Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Monitoring Report** – Ken reported that Alex had submitted this online shortly before his visit. A copy had been circulated with the agenda. The report showed that staff training was up to date. A number of calls had been made requesting safeguarding advice, indicating that staff were aware of potential issues, but no formal referrals had been made. |  |
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| **c)** | **Review of Policy on Safeguarding and Child Protection** – The updated Policy on Safeguarding and Child Protection had circulated with the agenda. Governors agreed unanimously to endorse the Policy, subject to the updating of the review dates on the footer. Once updated, the Policy would be signed by Ken as named Safeguarding Governor, Julia as Chair and Alex as Acting Head. | **Ken/Julia/****Alex** |
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| **d)** | **Keeping Children Safe in Education** – Governors noted that a new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education was due to be published in September, which Alex would circulate to all staff. | **Alex** |
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| **13.** | **Key Issues from Resources Committee** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the Resources Committee held on 26th April 2018 were received. Arising from the meeting, Governors discussed a number of issues. |  |
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|  | [Alex left the meeting whilst the following item was discussed.] |  |
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| **a)** | **Head of Centre’s salary** – Julia reminded Governors that the Governing Body had previously agreed to appoint Alex as Head of Centre with effect from September 2018 but that the salary for her substantive appointment had not yet been agreed. Resources Committee had considered this and had made a recommendation to the Governing Body, which Governors agreed unanimously. |  |
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|  | Governors also endorsed a suggestion from Julia that the Centre continue to provide mentoring support for Alex from Kay Dimelow until at least April 2019. |  |
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|  | [Alex re-joined the meeting at this point and was advised of the decision.] |  |
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| **b)** | **Submitted budget for 2018/19** – Governors received the submitted budget for 2018/19. Sue noted that it would need some changes to reflect staffing adjustments. |  |
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| **c)** | **New style budget report for May 2018 –** This had been circulated with the agenda; however, Sue advised Governors that the figures were not correct as the new system was not pulling the figures through correctly for Fund 08 (Owlets and day care). Sue had attended training on Orovia, the new system, earlier in the day and expressed her continuing frustration with the local authority’s arrangements for implementation and support. In addition Janet Jallow, the local authority financial adviser, was on long-term leave; some support was being provided by her manager, Ray Byford. |  |
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|  | Governors shared Sue’s frustration at the continuing difficulties. They sought and received assurance that expenditure against budget was considered to be on track. |  |
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| **d)** | **Proposal for a joint committee** – Alex advised Governors of a request received from Huntingdon Nursery to establish a joint committee for hearings. This would consist of a pool of Governors appointed by all of the nursery schools, who could be called upon to hear complaints, grievances, pupil exclusions and staff dismissals and appeals, in cases in which the originating nursery school did not have enough impartial Governors to deal with the issue internally. |  |
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|  | Governors and Gwyneth as Clerk expressed some reservations about this proposal: |  |
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|  | * Governing bodies were typically quite large (14 Governors at Homerton) and only three Governors were required for hearings such as these. It would be unusual if a Governing Body did not have three Governors who had not previously been involved in an issue. It was best practice to appoint an appeals committee at the beginning of each school year, comprising Governors who were unlikely to be involved in the early stages of such issues, e.g. not on the Committee considering staffing.
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|  | * Decisions such as staff dismissals could have serious implications and it would be essential that all processes were followed accurately to ensure legality.
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|  | * Governors appointed to assist another school should ideally have particular expertise in the relevant area. However, even if they had relevant expertise, they would not have a detailed knowledge of the other nursery school’s culture and circumstances.
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|  | * Involvement in hearings could be very time-consuming and Governor capacity was limited.
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|  | Governors emphasised that they were keen to offer support to other nursery schools and that having independent input on difficult issues could be extremely helpful. It was accepted, however, that informal input would not have the legality conferred by formal appointment by the Governing Body. |  |
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|  | In conclusion, Governors asked Alex to advise Huntingdon that Homerton was not willing at this time to appoint Governors to a standing joint Committee. Homerton would be willing to consider specific requests for help, provided that enough time was allowed for due process to be followed and on the understanding that even in this eventuality, it was possible that a Governor with both the necessary expertise and the capacity might not be available. | **Alex** |
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| **14.** | **Disciplinary Procedure relating to Misconduct for All Employees** |  |
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|  | Governors agreed unanimously to endorse the Disciplinary Procedure relating to Misconduct for All Employees as circulated with the agenda. |  |
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| **15.** | **Mathematical Development Policy** |  |
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|  | Governors welcomed the work on this Policy. It was suggested that a comment be added on the cross-curricular nature of children’s engagement with Maths, for example in the role play area and as part of their physical development. |  |
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|  | Subject to this point, it was agreed unanimously to endorse the Mathematical Development Policy. | **Mitali/****Alex** |
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| **16.** | **Any Other Urgent Matters** |  |
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| **a)** | **Early Years Foundation Stage Governors’ Network** – Julia reported that she had attended an EYFS Governors’ Network meeting on 27th June 2018. A key suggestion had been that Governors could be involved with the local authority’s Keeping in Touch visits; this was welcomed. Julia also reported on discussion at the meeting on the use of social media, especially to involve hard to reach parents; stage areas in EYFS outside spaces [Homerton already has one outside East Room]; and pictorial instructions showing children how to play games such as tag. |  |
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| **17.** | **Dates of Meetings for 2018/19** |  |
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|  | Dates for meetings in 2018/19 were agreed as follow, all at 7.00pm at Homerton: |  |
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|  | * Thursday 20th September 2018
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|  | * Thursday 6th December 2018
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|  | * Tuesday 12th February 2019
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|  | * Tuesday 26th March 2019
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|  | * Tuesday 9th July 2019.
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|  | One additional date would be needed for the budget meeting at the start of the summer term. Sue and Alex agreed to liaise with Gwyneth on this date and it would be confirmed shortly. | **Sue/Alex/****Gwyneth** |
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|  | The formal meeting ended at 9. 15pm. |  |
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|  | **Thanks to Outgoing Governors** |  |
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|  | As this was the last meeting to be attended by Julia, Alex made a presentation and thanked Julia for all of her hard work as a Governor and as Chair. Julia made a presentation and thanked Shelly, who would also be standing down at the end of the school year. |  |